

- **Tuberculosis** — Robeson accounted for 16 cases or a rate of 8.0. All other counties had no more than one or two cases.
- **Hepatitis B** — Robeson accounted for 85 cases for an elevated rate of 42.4. Scotland's rate was higher at 74.9 (9 cases). With a rate of 39.6, Swain contributed all six cases from the reservation counties.

In considering the above data, the reader should keep in mind that infectious disease counts are subject to testing and reporting biases which tend to underrepresent persons tested in the private health sector.

Among the Year 2000 national health objectives for Native Americans is the reduction of the tuberculosis case rate to 5.0 per 100,000 population.⁴ The 1990 case rate for American Indians in North Carolina was 7.5.

HEALTH-RELATED SURVEYS

A report on the health status of Blacks, now in progress, includes data from a number of sample surveys. Unfortunately, those samples include few Native Americans, so estimates for this group are not available. It is anticipated, however, that future updates of the current report may include multiple years of data from the adult Behavioral Risk Factor Survey and the school-based Youth Risk Behavior Survey. North Carolina participates with the Centers for Disease Control in these national surveys. It is also recommended that these state surveys oversample Native Americans in the future.

Meanwhile, a national survey of nonurban Native American teenagers⁷ has revealed a complex web of health problems and risk behaviors among these youth. For example, 22 percent of females and 12 percent of males reported ever having attempted suicide, and over half of these youth had attempted suicide more than once. Twenty-two percent reported their health as only fair or poor. Eighteen percent said they were sad all the time, and 11 percent told of extreme hopelessness. Eighteen percent reported having been the victim of sexual or physical abuse, or both. Regular use of tobacco and drugs was high with

one-third reporting ever having driven under the influence of alcohol. And only about half of the youths surveyed had received any type of preventive health exams or visits in the past two years. The extent to which these findings are representative of North Carolina's Native American youth is unknown. The need for state surveys that oversample Native Americans is clear.

CONCLUSION

Among results of the present study are the following:

- Many health indicators for North Carolina's Native Americans are better than those for Blacks but worse than those for Whites.
- Compared to both Whites and Blacks, abortion utilization is low.
- More than half (an estimated 54%) of Native American pregnancies appear to be unintended (unwanted or mistimed).
- Smoking during pregnancy and low education appear especially prevalent among Native American mothers.
- Diabetes, hypertension, and C-Section appear especially prevalent among Indian mothers of the reservation counties while anemia appears highly prevalent among Indian mothers elsewhere.
- Birth defects, particularly musculoskeletal defects and hypospadias, appear more prevalent among Native Americans than others.
- Compared to North Carolina Blacks and Whites, the state's Native Americans appear particularly vulnerable to death from diabetes and motor vehicle injuries. Native American median ages at death were also low for non-motor-vehicle unintentional injuries, liver disease/cirrhosis, and suicide.
- Compared to their U.S. counterparts, the state's Native Americans appear at excess risk of death from heart disease, cancer, stroke, and homicide.